

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A ball and socket joint comprising:

a ball and socket joint housing having a joint opening;

a ball pivot including a joint ball portion, ~~which~~ is arranged in the ball and socket joint housing, said ball pivot extending extends through the joint opening and with which a shaft is made integral;

a support ring arranged on the shaft of the ball pivot; and

a sealing element, which is arranged between the support ring and a connection component surrounding the shaft of the ball pivot wherein said sealing element comprises an elastically and/or plastically deformable profiled body having an effective cross section, which is free from the effect of forces, that is limited by a continuously extending, curved contour, which is subject to deformation in an installed state, as a result of which at least a partial area of said contour is in contact with adjoining areas that are to be sealed, wherein one portion of said sealing element extends generally axially and is arranged, between said shaft of said ball pivot and said connection component in a radial direction of said ball pivot, and another portion of said sealing element extends radially and is arranged between said support ring and said connection component in an axial direction of said ball pivot, said connection component being located at a first axial distance from said joint ball portion, said support ring being located at a second axial distance from said joint ball portion, said first axial distance being greater than said second axial distance.

2. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein said elastically and/or plastically deformable profiled body has a profiled basic body and sealing segments.

3. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 2, wherein said sealing segments extend radially oriented in relation to said profiled basic body.

4. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 2, wherein transition areas are provided for connecting said profiled basic body to said sealing segments.

5. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 4, wherein a material or a material combination that permits elastic deflection of said sealing segments adjoining said transition area is selected for said transition area.

6. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein said profiled body has a connection surface, via which said profiled body is connected to an adjoining component.

7. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 6, wherein said adjoining component is said support ring.

8. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 6, wherein the connection between said profiled body and said adjoining component is established by vulcanization or bonding.

9. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 6, wherein said profiled body is positioned on said ball pivot or said support ring in preparation for the mounting of said ball and socket joint.

10. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 9, wherein said profiled body is positioned on said adjoining component as a result of a radial expansion of said profiled body such that said profiled body forms a positive-locking connection or non-positive connection with said adjoining component.

11. (Currently Amended) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim [[1]] 2, wherein said support ring has a radially extending flange, with which at least one said sealing segment of said profiled body is in contact under pretension.

12. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 2, wherein said support ring has a radially extending flange, with a radially outer front surface of which at least one said sealing segment of said profiled body is in contact under pretension.

13. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein said profiled body has at least one stabilizing element.

14. (Currently Amended) A motor vehicles chassis ball and socket joint comprising:
a ball and socket joint housing having a joint opening;

a ball pivot comprising a ball portion arranged in said ball and socket joint housing and
an integral shaft portion arranged outside of said ball and socket joint housing;

5 a support ring on said shaft portion, said support ring having an axially extending
portion in contact with said shaft portion and a radially extending portion;

a connection component surrounding said shaft portion;

a sealing element arranged between said support ring and said connection component,
said sealing element comprising an elastically and/or plastically deformable profiled body having
10 an effective cross section in a state not affected by compressive or tensile forces, said effective
cross section having a continuously extending curved contour subject to deformation in an
installed state, said profiled body having a first sealing portion and a second sealing portion in
said installed state, said first sealing portion extending in a radial direction of said ball pivot in
said installed state such that said first sealing portion engages said connection component and
15 said support ring, said second sealing portion extending in an axial direction of said ball pivot
in said installed state such that said second sealing portion engages said shaft portion of said ball
pivot, said connection component being located at an axially spaced location from said support
ring;

a sealing bellows having a first end and a second end, said first end of said sealing bellows engaging said ball and socket joint housing, said second end of said sealing bellows engaging said axially extending portion of said support ring and said radially extending portion of said support ring, said radially extending portion of said support ring extending between said second end of said sealing bellows and said sealing element.

15. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 14, wherein said elastically and/or plastically deformable profiled body has a profiled basic body and sealing segments extending radially in relation to said profiled basic body.

16. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 15, wherein said profiled body includes transition areas connecting said profiled basic body to said sealing segments.

17. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 14, wherein said engagement between said profiled body, said connection component and said shaft of said ball pivot comprises a connection established by vulcanization or bonding.

18. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 14, wherein said support ring has a radially extending flange having an area to be sealed of said support ring, said radially extending flange being in contact with said profiled body under

pretension or compression.

19. (Previously Presented) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 14, wherein said profiled body has at least one stabilizing element.

20. (Currently Amended) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 1, wherein said sealing element maintains said shaft of said ball pivot at a radially spaced location from said connection component, said sealing element maintaining said support ring at [[an]] said axially spaced location from said connection component.

21. (New) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 1, further comprising a sealing bellows extending from said ball and socket joint housing to said support ring, wherein one end of said sealing bellows engages said supporting ring.

22. (New) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 21, wherein said support ring has a radial flange and an axial support ring portion, said sealing bellows engaging said axial support ring portion and said radial flange, said radial flange extending between said sealing bellows and said sealing element.

23. (New) A ball and socket joint in accordance with claim 21, wherein said support ring directly engages said shaft.

24. (New) A motor vehicles chassis ball and socket joint comprising:

a ball and socket joint housing having a joint opening;

a ball pivot comprising a ball portion arranged in said ball and socket joint housing and
an integral shaft portion arranged outside of said ball and socket joint housing;

5 a support ring on said shaft portion;

a connection component surrounding said shaft portion;

a sealing element arranged between said support ring and said connection component,
said sealing element comprising an elastically and/or plastically deformable profiled body having
an effective cross section in a state not affected by compressive or tensile forces, said effective
10 cross section having a continuously extending curved contour subject to deformation in an
installed state, said profiled body having a first sealing portion and a second sealing portion in
said installed state, said first sealing portion extending in a radial direction of said ball pivot in
said installed state such that said first sealing portion engages said connection component and
said support ring, said second sealing portion extending in an axial direction of said ball pivot
15 in said installed state such that said second sealing portion engages said shaft portion of said ball
pivot; and

a sealing bellows extending from said ball and socket joint housing to said support ring,
wherein one end of said sealing bellows is in contact with said support ring.